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THE NATIONAL



SPORTS DAILY

# 'Return of Robocop' smacks of cop-out

One of the strangest pro wrestling gimmicks in recent years is the selling point of the National Wrestling Alliance's next pay-per-view telecast.

The May 19 show from the Washington, D.C., Armory is being called "Capital Combat '90: The Return of Robocop." Robocop is the character from the sci-fi movie of a few years back of the same name. A sequel, Robocop II, will be released this summer.

The real story behind this is that Turner Home Entertainment purchased the video rights to the Robocop sequel, feeling pro wrestling would help publicity.



**GRUNT AND GRIN**

BY DAVE MELTZER  
FOR THE NATIONAL

Turner Home Entertainment is a sister company to World Championship Wrestling Inc., another Ted Turner subsidiary, which is the parent company of the NWA. In the eyes of many NWA wrestlers, it's a present from a relative that they would rather have not received.

While this isn't the first time movie characters have infiltrated pro wrestling, this will be the first futuristic cyborg to make the plunge. Previous acting-to-wrestling transitions for pay-per-views by the World Wrestling Federation have included Mr. T and Zeus.

Still, even a form of sports entertainment that relies on its audience suspending its disbelief, Robocop may be stretching things. While both Mr. T and Zeus were not wrestlers, they were at least human beings who the general public believed were "tough guys."

In fact, Mr. T had a tough-guy reputation from television greater than any pro wrestler when promoter Vince McMahon brought him in for a handful of appearances in 1985 and 1986.

There is no doubt that the appearance of Mr. T was the main selling point of the first Wrestlemania, the show that put the WWF on the entertainment

## MOST EXPERIENCED WRESTLERS

Active pro wrestlers with the most years of experience

|                         |                 |     |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-----|
| 1. Mr. Wrestling II     | (Independent)   | 38* |
| 2. Abdullah the Butcher | (All Japan)     | 33  |
| 3. "Bulldog" Bob Brown  | (CNWA)          | 32  |
| 4. Shohei "Giant" Baba  | (All Japan)     | 31  |
| Harley Race             | (Puerto Rico)   | 31  |
| 6. Kantaro Hoshino      | (New Japan)     | 30  |
| 7. Ivan Koloff          | (Independent)   | 29  |
| 8. "Rugged" Ron Garvin  | (WWF)           | 28  |
| 9. Mil Mascaras         | (Mexico)        | 26  |
| Dick Murdoch            | (FMW)           | 26  |
| Masa Saito              | (AWA/New Japan) | 26  |
| Baron Von Raschke       | (AWA)           | 26  |
| Tiger Jeet Singh        | (All Japan)     | 26  |
| Great Kabuki            | (All Japan)     | 26  |
| Ruster Kimura           | (All Japan)     | 26  |

\* Mr. Wrestling II will be wrestling again

map. But by the second Wrestlemania, Mr. T had worn out his welcome with wrestling fans and was booed loudly during a match with then-hated villain Rowdy Roddy Piper.

Zeus, or Tom Lister, wasn't so well-known as T, but he was a bodyguard for actor Eddie Murphy and had several parts on both television and in the movies. More important, he was 6-foot-5, 280 pounds.

The WWF put lifts in his boots, advertised him as being 6-10, 340, and for a few pay-per-view skirmishes with Hogan last year, portrayed him as the most intimidating human being on Earth. He, too, then dropped out of wrestling.

Robocop, however, is clearly a fictitious movie character. Since many of the NWA's wrestlers pride themselves on being more athletic than other groups, the idea of bringing in a futuristic robot with supernatural powers clearly doesn't sit well with them.

But at least he won't be wrestling.

Robocop's official role will be to make sure villains Barry Windham, Sid Vicious, Ole and Arn Anderson don't attack Sting and reinjure his bad knee.

Sting will be seconding Lex Luger, who gets his final shot at NWA world champion Ric Flair in a steel-cage match that headlines the show. Back in February, Luger had Flair in his "torture rack" finisher when the Andersons attacked Sting at ringside.

Luger jumped out of the ring to save Sting, but in doing so he was counted out of the ring and lost his title match with Flair.

ETC. Brutus (The Barber) Beefcake will be the first challenger when Mr. Perfect goes around the country

defending the WWF Intercontinental title at the end of the month. ... With Hulk Hogan taking a summer hiatus from wrestling, the WWF headline matches in June will be Ultimate Warrior defending the WWF title against Ravishing Rick Rude; Earthquake facing Hacksaw Jim Duggan, and Dusty Rhodes and Sapphire against Queen Sensational Sherri and Randy (Macho King) Savage, with Elizabeth and Brother Love in the respective corners. ... Ric Flair and AWA champion Larry Zbyszko both retained their titles on a rare double title bill called "Twin Wars" on May 5 in St. Paul. Flair defeated Brian Pillman to keep the NWA title, while Zbyszko kept his AWA title by getting disqualified against Nikita Koloff by hitting special ref Nick Bockwinkel. Former Minnesota Viking Bob Lurtsema made his pro wrestling debut on the same show, which drew an estimated 1,800 paid. ... WWF is introducing a new character called Bronto at its television tapings next week. ... Japanese wrestler Genichiro Tenryu signed a five-year contract for \$632,000 per year to jump from All Japan to a new promotion that will be starting up in June. The contract makes Tenryu the second-highest paid wrestler in the world, trailing only Hogan.



Ric Flair